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R 080614Z NOV 70
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7842
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL DANANG
USDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Iguber DATE 1/12/82
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UNCLAS SAIGON 17874

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: USDEL FRANCE 0626 NC

SUBJECT: VIET-NAM GUARDIAN EDITORIAL ON GENERAL DUONG VAN MINH

1. ON NOVEMBER 7 THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE VIET-NAM GUARDIAN PUBLISHED A PERSONAL DEFENSE OF PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL GENERAL DUONG VAN MINH AND APPEALED FOR NATIONAL SOLIDARITY UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP. PROBABLY BY COINCIDENCE ONLY, THIS PIECE APPEARED SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH AN ARTICLE PUBLISHED BY LE MONDE IN WHICH TON THAT THIEN, FORMER INFORMATION MINISTER (HUONG CABINET) AND PROMINENT INDEPENDENT BUDDHIST LAYMAN, URGED PRESIDENT THIEU TO RENOUNCE A SECOND TERM IN FAVOR OF GENERAL MINH, THUS MEETING THE NLF'S PRIMARY DEMAND FOR THE OUSTER OF THE "THIEU-KY-KHIEM-REGIME" AND OPENING THE WAY FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT (REFTEL).

2. IN AN EDITORIAL SIGNED BY PUBLISHER NGUYEN VAN TUOI, ONE OF GENERAL MINH'S CLOSEST ADVISORS, THE GUARDIAN DEFENDS THE GENERAL AGAINST A HOST OF CHARGES THAT HE IS "LAZY, A BAD ADMINISTRATOR, DISINTERESTED," COVETOUS OF

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THE PRESIDENCY, "A BAD POLITICIAN," AND "CONTENTED WITH RAISING HIS ORCHIDS AND HAVING A GOOD GAME OF TENNIS." PRAISING THE GENERAL AS A "TRULY DEDICATED AND CAPABLE MAN," THE EDITORIAL NOTES THAT MINH "NEVER PRETENDED TO BE A POLITICIAN" AND THAT IN 1963 HE DENIED HIMSELF THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE "LEGALLY PLEBECITED TO THE PRESIDENCY." THEREFORE PROVING HE "DOES NOT ENVY THAT HONOR."

3. REPEATING A POPULAR REFRAIN, THE EDITORIAL OBSERVES THAT "WITH SOLIDARITY AND NATIONAL RECONCILIATION - AND THE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY - AS GENERAL MINH HAS TAKEN PAINS TO EMPHASIZE - OUR CAUSE WILL ~~CERTAINLY~~ PREVAIL AND WE SHALL OVERCOME ALL OBSTACLES WE WILL FIND IN WAY TO REBUILD THIS NATION." "BUT", THE EDITORIAL CONTINUES; "SUCH A TASK CANNOT BE PERFORMED AND GUIDED BY SOMEONE WHO DOES NOT ENJOY THE TRUST AND THE RESPECT OF THE PEOPLE" AND RECALLS GENERAL MINH'S STATEMENT ON NOVEMBER 1, 1970 THAT "THE IMPORTANT THING IS HOW TO BRING MEN OF GOOD WILL TOGETHER AND PUT THEM TO WORK FOR THE NATIONAL CAUSE." STRONGLY IMPLYING THAT MINH IS THE MAN OF THE HOUR, THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDES WITH THE PREDICTION "WHEN WE FIND THAT CATALYST, THE MAN WHO CAN RALLY ALL THE MEN OF GOODWILL, OUR MISERY AND THE WAR WILL BE OVER. AND WE WILL WIN, NOT THROUGH THE MIGHT OF OUR MILITARY FORCES ALONE BUT THANKS TO THE STRONG TIES OF SOLIDARITY AND OUR RECONCILIATION SPIRIT." BERGER

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